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24 June 2005

Issue 821

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2003 (53) BMC PROBUS 850 CLUB	31 seats, crew seat, air con, saloon toilet, fridge by crew seat, radio/tape/PA/monitor/video, lap belts, Telma retarder, manual gearbox	£66,000
2003 MERCEDES TOURO	49 soft line recliners, crew seat, air conditioning, Webasto, centre sunken toilet, fridge, boiler, double glazing, full draw curtains, video + 2 monitors	£95,000
2001 SCANIA L94 AUTO IRIZAR CENTURY	53 recliners, climate control, air conditioning, double glazing, retractable belts, drop down armrests, retarder	£95,000
2001 VOLVO B10M CAETANO ENIGMA	Auto gearbox, 51 recliners, saloon toilet, air-conditioning	£95,000
2000 MAN 18.310 MARCOPOLO	32 leather trimmed recliners, 5 tables, crew seat, rear saloon toilet, servery unit with fridge, boiler, microwave etc, rear continental door, air conditioning, side window blinds, adjustable footrest, radio/PA/tape/CD/DVD/2 monitors	£79,000
1999 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS	49 recliners, crew seat, centre sunken toilet, continental door, Telma retarder, air conditioning, hot drinks machine, curtains	£79,000
1999 (V) MAN 18.310 NOGE CATALAN 350	47 recliners, crew seat, centre sunken toilet, powered continental door, boiler, fridge by crew seat, full carpets, radio/PA/DVD/2 monitors, air conditioning	£79,000
1999 BOVA FUTURA FHD	49 recliners, crew seat, air conditioning, centre sunken toilet, continental door, Telma RING TO VIEW	£95,000
1999 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PREMIERE 350	48 recliners, crew seat, air conditioning, rear sunken toilet, fridge, Telma retarder, rear continental door, rack locker doors	£79,000
1998 MAN 24.400 NOGE CATALAN 400	double deck band coach, 14 berths, 8 seats, lower deck at 2 tables, 8 seats upper deck lounge area, fridge, boiler, microwave, monitors, TV/DVD/playstation/video x 2, toilet, air con, alloy wheels, driver's door, etc.	£90,000
1998 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE	48 recliners, crew seat, air conditioning, rear saloon toilet, fridge, boiler, Telma retarder, rack locker doors	£87,000
1997 VOLVO B10M BERKHOFF AXIAL GLIDER	27 Vogel super recliners + leg calf supports, seat back tables, crew seat, aircon + climate control, shades centre sunken toilet, fridge, boiler, continental door, retarder, drivers bunk, alloy wheels, radio/PA/monitor, 1 table	£68,000
1997 VOLVO B10M SE JONCKHEERE MISTRAL	51 recliners, crew seat, air-conditioning, hot water boiler by crew seat, floor mounted toilet, double glazing, radio/PA/tape/monitor/video	£72,000
1996 MERCEDES SPRINTER 208 SWB	8 seats, air-conditioning	£5,500
1996 MERCEDES 814 ROBIN HOOD	16 seater, air conditioned, power door, to be sold with new MOT	£16,750
1995 SETRA S210H	24 Ambiente recliners, 6 tables 2 crew seats, rear saloon, toilet, rear servery, video + monitor, air conditioned	RING TO VIEW £42,000

VOLVOS

1998 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PREMIERE 350	49/53 recliners, crew seat, double glazed, rear sunken toilet/continental door	£82,500 Reduced to £72,500
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1996 VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE 45	53 recliners, crew seat, centre sunken demounted toilet, continental door, double glazed	£59,000
1996 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PREMIERE 350	53 recliners, crew seat, rear continental door, double glazing, radio/tape	CHOICE OF TWO £58,000
1995 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE	49 recliners, crew seat, rear saloon toilet, rack locker doors, Telma, double glazing, rear continental door, radio/tape/PA/monitor, adjustable footrests	£57,500
1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200	53 recliners, rear continental door, Telma	£18,000
1985 (C) VOLVO B9M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200	43 retrimmed seats, retractable belts, curtains, carpet, radio/PA	£15,000

OTHER COACHES & MIDIS - MINIS

2000 MAN 18.350 NEOPLAN TRANSLINER	49 recliners, crew seat, centre sunken toilet, continental door, hot water boiler, fridge in dashboard, double glazing	£95,000
1997 TOYOTA OPTIMO MKV	16 Fainsa seats, seat belts, large rear boot, internal luggage pen, radio/tape	£12,000
1997 (R) MERCEDES 612 CRYSTALS	Conversion, 19 coach seats, 3 point belts, rear boot, racks, forced air ventilation, slam door with deep stepwell	£13,500
1997 LDV CONVOY ONYX	Conversion HIGH ROOF, 16 coach seats, drop step well entrance	£3,500
1995 DENNIS JAVELIN GX PLAXTON PREMIERE 350	53 seats, rear continental door, double glazing, rack locker doors, radio/tape/PA, curtains, auto gearbox	£37,500
1995 MERCEDES 814 CRYSTALS	33 coach seats, power door, rear boot, racks, forced air ventilation, reading lights	£19,500
1993 RENAULT PP160 WS VANGUARD II	33 semi-coach seats, 3 point seat belts, luggage racks, rear boot, tinted windows, radio/PA, auto G/B	£12,000
1992 BOVA FUTURA FHD	55 newly retrimmed recliners, crew seat, double glazed, demounted centre toilet & continental door	RING TO VIEW £27,000
1990 LEYLAND TIGER L10 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500	50 retrimmed recliners, crew seat, rear continental door, retractable seat belts, Telma retarder	£13,995
1990 MERCEDES 609 M2M	23 seats	£3,750
1990 TOYOTA OPTIMO	18 seater, rear hideaway wheelchair lift	£4,500
1988 SCANIA K112 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500	49 retrimmed recliners, centre sunken toilet, crew seat, continental door	£14,000
1988 BOVA FUTURA FHD	53 recliners, demounted toilet, later style front panel	£6,750
1988 LAG PANORAMIC	49 recliners	£4,500
1986 BEDFORD YNV PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200	57 seats	£2,400
1986 LEYLAND TIGER WADHAM STRINGER VANGUARD	55 Plaxton coach seats	£1,900
1996 MERCEDES 709 ALEXANDER SPRINT	23 seats + 8 standees, luggage pen, manual gearbox	CHOICE OF TWO £5,500

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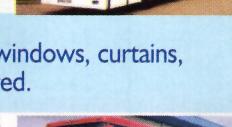
2002 SETRA S315 GTHD 12M

53 recliners, blue multi-col moquette with leather inlays to headrests, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, AIR CON, fridge, wired TV/video, Webasto, electric driver's window and mirrors. Exterior white.



2001 BOVA FUTURA FHD 12.370 INTEGRAL 12M

49 recliners, grey/black multi-col moquette, centre sunken toilet, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, AIR CON, fridge, drinks machine, and wired TV/video. Exterior cream/duo red.



2001 SCANIA K124 VAN HOOL ALIZEE-II 12M

53 recliners, lilac multi-col moquette, rear floor mounted toilet, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, AIR CON, drinks machine, aircraft style doors to hatracks, Comfort shift gearbox, retarder and wired TV/video. Exterior red/yellow.



2000 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PREMIERE 350 12M

49 recliners, red/orange/black moquette, rear sunken toilet, double glazed side windows, courier seat, curtains, AIR CON, aircraft style doors to hatracks and TELMA retarder. Exterior white.



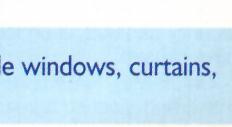
2000 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO-e 12M

49 recliners, blue/multi-col moquette, centre sunken toilet, power operated continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, AIR CON, driver's sleeping berth, drinks machine, fridge, wired for TV/video, driver's door, and power courier's and driver's windows. Exterior white.



1999 (Sept) DENNIS JAVELIN GX290 BERKHOFF AXIAL 12M

51 Vogel recliners, blue/orange/red moquette, rear sunken toilet, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, drinks machine, fridge and wired TV/video. Exterior white with orange vinyls.



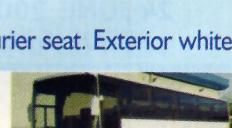
1998 SCANIA K113 VAN HOOL ALIZEE-HE 12M

49 recliners, re-trimmed in blue multi-col moquette, centre sunken toilet, double glazed side windows, curtains, courier seat, AIR CON, fridge, drinks machine, driver's berth, Comfort shift gearbox, retarder, alloy wheels and wired TV/video. Exterior white.



1997 DAF SB 3000 IKARUS 350 12M

53 recliners, grey multi-col moquette, double glazed side windows with pull-down blinds and courier seat. Exterior white.



1994 VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE 12M

48 recliners, brown/orange moquette, rear sunken toilet, double glazed side windows, curtains, courier seat, AIR CON, aircraft doors to hatracks, drinks machine, fridge, wired TV/video and TELMA retarder. Exterior white.



1994 (Sept) TOYOTA CAETANO OPTIMO III MIDICOACH

18 seats, grey/blue moquette, curtains, courier seat, drinks machine, driver's door and power entrance door. Exterior silver.

JUST IN



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CAETANO
OPTIMO IV
24R**



**1996 (Aug)
VOLVO B10M
JONCKHEERE
MISTRAL SE
51R**



**1995
VAN HOOL
EOS 90
INTEGRAL
51R**



**1993
SCANIA K113
BERKHOFF
EXCELLENCE
2000 49R**

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Russell Richardson appointed Chairman of NABI Rt

Russell Richardson has been appointed Chairman of the troubled NABI Rt Board with effect from 13 June. He has been on the Board since 2000 and remains Chairman of NABI's Optare subsidiary, which he founded. J. Daniel Garrett, NABI Rt.'s Chief Financial Officer and NABI Inc.'s interim Chief Executive Officer has resigned, with effect from 30 June 2005.

NABI is experiencing very serious difficulties stemming from the drop in the value of the dollar and the rise in the value of the Hungarian Florint. These difficulties

with its financiers to restructure \$103m of short-term debt. In return for a 90% stake in NABI Inc (NABI's American operation which completes vehicles at Anniston, Alabama) and a 33% stake in NABI Rt (the Hungarian operation which builds the shells for steel buses and had been building the composite CompoBus), they have agreed to reduce the debt to \$60m, reclassifying it as long-term debt repayable over 5-8 years. The debts are owed by NABI Inc, though NABI Rt will guarantee \$6.5m of this against its property assets. The financiers can appoint a third of the directors of NABI Rt

buses. Resulting from these continuing efforts, NABI Rt. announces that it has entered into negotiations that may or may not lead to an offer or offers being made for certain or substantially all of NABI Rt.'s and NABI Inc.'s assets and businesses in Hungary, US and/or UK. NABI Rt. will make further announcements on these

efforts in due course.'

There have been reports in the UK suggesting that Russell Richardson is bidding to re-acquire Optare, though his position as Chairman of the NABI Rt board would appear to rule this out. Optare management have declined to comment on these rumours.



Production of the NABI CompoBus is understood to have ceased.

have been compounded by the decision of the US Federal Transit Administration not to renew the waiver that enabled publicly funded American operators to buy NABI's CompoBus design although its US content did not meet the 'Buy America' requirements. As a result, production of the CompoBus at the plant at Kaposvar in Hungary, built as recently as 2002, is understood to have ceased.

On 26 May, NABI announced that it had reached agreement

and all but one of the directors of NABI Inc.

A NABI Rt statement adds, 'The financiers support the continuing efforts by NABI Rt. to sell assets and businesses, the proceeds of which will be used to continue to reduce debt as quickly as practicable. NABI Rt. will also continue to restructure its operations with a view to improving efficiency and productivity and ensuring the long term prospects of manufacturing steel

Go-Ahead acquisition of Southern Vectis successful

The Go-Ahead Group plc had received valid acceptances for 94.4% of the issued ordinary share capital of Southern Vectis plc by 17 June 2005, and has consequently declared its offer wholly unconditional.

Go-Ahead intends to compulsorily acquire the outstanding shares and de-list Southern Vectis from the AIM, which it expects to

accomplish on 18 July 2005.

Southern Vectis achieved a profit before tax for the year ended 30 April 2004 of £812,000 (2003: £677,000) on turnover of £16.98 million (2003: £16.02 million). Its bus operations include the Southern Vectis fleet on the Isle of Wight and Solent Blue Line, based in Eastleigh.

Strong Stagecoach results

Stagecoach has returned impressive figures for the year to 30 April 2005. Total operating profit (excluding goodwill amortisation and exceptional items) is up from £147.5m to £156.7m with operating profit up from £129.7m to £132.8m. Turnover from continuing operations was £1,787.6m (2004: £1,641.1m). Profit before tax was £136.8m (2004: £120.2m) excluding goodwill amortisation and exceptional items and including these factors was £108.3m (2004: £95.8m). earnings per share rose by 34.3% to 9.0p and the full year dividend was 3.3p (2004: 2.9p).

The UK Bus division had an excellent year increasing turnover

by 10.8% to £720.3m (2004: £650.2m). Operating profit rose by 10.3% to £82.5m (2004: £74.8m) Operating margin remained strong at 11.5%. Excluding the impact of additional operating leases and losses relating to the development of megabus.com, UK Bus operating margin was 12.6% compared with 12.2% in 2004. The company says that its new telemarketing unit has been attracting thousands of new bus users it expects the two-year campaign to generate further organic growth for provincial bus operations. Passenger volumes grew by 1.5%, and turnover by 7.1% in operations outside London, including megabus.com.

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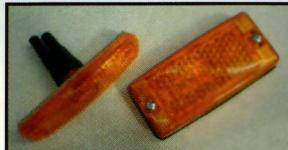
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UNIVERSAL



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Dennis introduce Voith DV500 in Dart

Alexander-Dennis have introduced the option of the Voith DV500 gearbox in the Dennis Dart SLF. The three speed DV500 comes with an integral hydrodynamic



A Voith DV500 gearbox attached to a Cummins ISBe four-cylinder engine.

retarder and is only 503mm long. It is being offered as an alternative to the Allison S2000 box with external Telma retarder, which continues to be an option. Available on orders immediately, there is a modest premium over

the price of the Allison. Apart from its compactness, the Voith benefits from being able to cope with torque inputs of up to 920Nm, considerably more than the S2000.

Field trials have already been carried out on two vehicles, in addition to which, the box is used in the Enviro 200. The first production Darts to feature it will be five 8.5m examples with 135bhp Cummins four cylinder engines for Epsom Buses. They will carry East Lancs bodies and be delivered during July.



The compact installation of the DV500 gearbox within the Dart chassis.

Third Forth road bridge

The Scottish Executive has announced the go-ahead for a new road bridge crossing the Forth at Kincardine. Work is due to start next year and it should be open to traffic by the end of 2008. The new crossing, combined with the recently opened Kincardine Eastern Link Road, will enable all traffic crossing the Forth to bypass Kincardine. The estimated cost is between £100 million and £120 million.

Transport Minister Nicol Stephen said: 'This second crossing will improve transport links in Forth Valley and Central Scotland. It will significantly improve the quality of life for the local community in Kincardine, as well as improving travel for road users in Clackmannan, Falkirk and Fife.'

NatEx confirms TGM purchase

National Express Group confirmed on 17 June that it had completed the purchase of the London Bus Division of Tellings Golden Miller PLC. The businesses acquired in the £20.4m deal will be merged into the existing National Express London bus operations under the management of Travel London's Managing Director, Paul McGowan.

UK Bus Awards deadline

The final entry date for the new look UK Bus Awards, the successor scheme to the Bus Industry Awards, is 1 July, so there is just time to get your entry in. To enter, download an entry form or enter online at www.ukbusawards.co.uk.

The top accolade remains the Belmont International Bus Operator of the Year, but this now has categories for fleets with up to 249 vehicles and over that figure. Other categories include the Viacom Outdoor Bus Marketing Campaign of the Year, the BAA Heathrow Customer Service Team of the Year, the NEOMAN Bus UK Transport Authority of the Year, the Successful Partnership Award, the Active Integration Award, the Award for Innovation, the Award for Social Responsibility.

Full awards details are available on the UK Bus Awards website.

Bus stop smoking ban?

The Government is consulting on the proposed smoking ban outlined in last year's Choosing Health: Making Healthy Choices Easier White Paper. Plans published could put many bus stop stops off limits for smokers in England. It is suggested that those stops with enclosed shelters should be included within the scope of a ban.

Accessible auction

Manheim Auctions recently held their first specialist wheelchair accessible vehicle and minibus sale at their Dursley, Gloucestershire site. Under the banner "Centre for a Day", 185 vehicle were on offer, almost 60 of them minibuses entered by AssetCo who had previously leased them to local authorities across the UK.

James Davis, Manheim's Regional LCV Manager, commented "Utilising our experience a bespoke marketing programme was undertaken utilising leading national trade magazines and press. Our catchment area for these specialised vehicles was truly UK wide with buyers travelling from as far afield as Scotland and Ireland."

Overall 87% of vehicles were sold, the minibuses achieving close to their reserve values with specific vehicles such as a pair of 1998 Frank Guy converted Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 410s and a small batch of slightly older white Ford Transits achieving good prices. The success of the sale has led to both Motability and AssetCo committing to further sales on 23 August and 15 November.

London under-16s travel free

From the start of the new academic year in September under-16s will not be charged to travel on buses and trams in London, as promised by Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, in his manifesto for his second term in office. Currently, children under 11 travel free. Around 450,000 children are expected to benefit at a cost of

Under the new scheme 14 and 15-year-olds will need an Oyster photocard for free travel. These can be obtained from post offices from 1 July onwards at a cost of £5.00. Anyone abusing the scheme will have their free travel withdrawn.

Ken Livingstone described the move as, 'a radical investment in London's future,' claiming it would, 'encourage young people to use public transport.'

Next year the scheme will be extended to under-18s in full time education. Polls conducted by the Greater London Authority show that 80 per cent of Londoners support free fares for under-18s in full-time education.

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Volvo to close Heilbronn plant

Volvo Buses is closing its coach factory in Heilbronn, Germany, where the Volvo 9900, described by Volvo as, 'a unique low volume product' is currently manufactured. Though it has been marketed as Volvo's flagship coach, the 9900 has not been profitable for many years.

Volvo Buses' board decided in the spring to no longer accept losses at the factory and sought an alternative for it, including trying to find a buyer for all, or part, of the business. When no alternative could be found, the decision was taken to close the factory.

A Volvo statement described the decision as, 'in line with Volvo



The Heilbronn built Volvo 9900. Existing orders will be completed before the plant closes.

Buses' long-term strategy for achieving profitability and continuing to upgrade the global coach range and concentrate manufacturing at the main factories.' The costs related to the close down, around £6.9m (SEK 95m), will be charged against income in the second quarter of the year.

The coaches already planned for the factory will be completed and the management expects around 150 employees to leave in stages during the summer and autumn. Volvo Busse Industries (Deutschland) GmbH, has, together with the unions, negotiated various supporting measures for the employees.



The top model in the Drögmöller range was the E440 Meteor double deck coach.



Drögmöller's last appearance in its own right at the IAA show was in 1994 when this E330H EuroComet with trademark theatre style seating was one of the exhibits.



The Drögmöller Europulmann 256 Stufendecker was a 12m 51-55 seater built in 1974/75 with a 256bhp Mercedes OM402 V8 engine.



Bergland of Watford bought three Drögmöller coaches in the mid 1980s. This 1985 E330 Comet with sloping window and floor line is seen waiting to board a ferry at Calais.



ARRIVA
Bus and Coach



- 2004 DAF SB4000XF auto VANHOOL ALIZEE T9, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air con
- 2001 EOS 90 auto MAN eng, 48 reclining seats, rear toilet, air con
- 2001 EOS 90 auto MAN eng, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air con
- 2000 DAF SB3000 man VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 49 reclining seats, rear toilet, air con
- 2000 DAF SB3000 auto IKARUS 396, 49 reclining seats, rear toilet, air con
- 2000 SCANIA K124 C shift VANHOOL ALIZEE T9, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air con
- 2000 SCANIA K124 C shift VANHOOL ALIZEE T9, 48 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air con
- 1999 EOS 90 man MAN eng, 48 reclining seats, rear toilet, air con
- 1999 OPTARE EXCEL auto CUMMINS 215 bhp eng, 44 seats, 21 standees, buggy space
- 1999 MERCEDES 412D auto WHITACRES, 14 seats with 3 point belts, large rear luggage
- 1998 DAF SB3000 man VANHOOL ALIZEE T9, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air con
- 1998 EOS 90 man MAN eng, 49 reclining seats, rear toilet, air con
- 1998 EOS 90 man MAN eng, 48 reclining seats, rear toilet, air con
- 1998 MAN Trixle man NOGE CATALAN 370, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air con
- 1997 VOLVO B10M man VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 48 reclining seats, rear toilet
- 1996 DAF SB3000 man PLAXTON PREMIERE 350, 53 reclining seats
- 1996 DAF SB3000 man VANHOOL ALIZEE DH, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air con
- 1996 EOS 90 man MAN eng, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air con
- 1996 EOS 90 man MAN eng, 51 reclining seats, rear toilet, air con
- 1996 EOS 80 man MERC eng, 30 reclining seats, rear toilet, air con
- 1996 OPTARE EXCEL auto CUMMINS eng, 42 seats, 21 standees, buggy space
- 1995 DAF SB3000 man VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet
- 1994 DAF SB3000 m/ret VANHOOL ALIZEE DH, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet
- 1993 DAF SB3000 auto VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet
- 1993 DAF SB3000 man VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air con
- 1993 DAF SB3000 man VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet
- 1992 DAF MB230 man VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet
- 1988 DAF SB2300 man DUPLE 320, 57 seats
- 1983 SCANIA man JONCKHEERE JUBILEE 50, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet

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Volvo insists that the commercial organisation in Germany will not be affected by the closure. Volvo Buses will continue investing in the country and offer the full product range, including the new version of the Volvo 9700 coach, recently launched in the UK.

Drögmöller

The Heilbronn plant was formerly the headquarters of the Drögmöller coachbuilding concern, which had been founded in 1920 by Gotthard Drögmöller. From 1965 onwards it also built integral coaches featuring Mercedes-Benz engines. It was famous for producing very high quality coaches including many with theatre style seating layouts, and the Volvo 9900 had continued this tradition. Volvo Bus acquired Drögmöller in September 1994. In the mid-1980s, the company had supplied three right hand drive coaches to Bergland of Watford, but there was never a formal dealership arrangement for the UK. Such a dealership was discussed with the former DSB Sales organisation of Long

Whatton and a left hand drive customer coach exhibited at a show held at their premises, but the price tag would have been so high that DSB thought better of it.

The range became quite diverse with 9.77m, 10.56m, 11.3m, and 12m options integral options, as well as bodies mounted on Mercedes coach chassis. In addition to coaches with flat and theatre style floors, there were various tri-axle over-deckers (with a single seating deck running over the driver's cab) and the double deck Meteor E440. A special version of the E330K Comet was built for Switzerland that was only 2.3m wide and 10.56m long. At one time, the company claimed to have a 30% market share among Swiss private coach operators.

Shortly before Volvo acquired the business, Drögmöller had built the one and only example of the Mercedes-Benz O.404 double deck coach. There had been plans for Drögmöller to build it on behalf of Mercedes but these were abandoned before the Volvo sale.



Pictured in Windsor coach park is an early post Volvo takeover B12.500 demonstrator based on the Volvo B12R displaying both Volvo and Drögmöller badges.



Bergland bought two of these straight window line E320s in 1986.

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2002 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

Automatic gearbox, 53 seats, 3 point seatbelts, fridge in dashboard, double glazing, A/C, webasto, Intarder, rear continental door



2002 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

8 speed gearbox, 3 point seatbelts, webasto, Telma, continental



2000 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

ZF 8 speed gearbox, 47/51 seats, recliners, double glazing, air conditioning, Webasto, Retarder, toilet, rear continental door, drinks, courier fridge, drinks, power door



2000 IVECO BEULAS EL MUNDO

8 speed ZF gearbox, 49/51 seats, A/C, curtains, double glazed, centre continental door, drivers bunk, telma, power door, toilet, radio/pa/cassette, tv/video, drinks



1999 IVECO BEULAS EL MUNDO

8 Speed gearbox, conditioning, curtains, centre continental door, toilet, radio, tv/video, dr



1997 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

8 speed gearbox, 50 seats, double glazing, A/C, retarder, centre toilet, continental door, servery, water boiler, drinks machine, radio/pa/cassette



1999 IVECO BEULAS STERGO E

Manual gearbox, 49 seats, double glazing, air-conditioning, webasto, retarder, centre toilet, continental door, drinks machine, fridge, radio/pa/cassette, video/monitors



1999 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

8 speed gearbox, double glazing, centre toilet, Telma, auxiliary heat, radio/pa/cassette, T

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2001 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

53 reclining seats, double glazing, A/C, curtains, rear door



2001 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

49 seats, air conditioning, double glazed, centre door, telma, power door/pa/cass, drinks, fridge



2001 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

49 seats, A/C, curtains, centre continental door, power door, toilet, TV/video, drinks, fridge



2002 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

8 speed manual gearbox, 40 seats, A/C, special Beulas toilet cabin for the disabled, wheelchair lift N/S centre of vehicle, case for wheelchair storage, flat floor, adapt roof, special emergency door, security device, movement detector



1999 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

AVS gearbox, 48 seats, double glazing, A/C, Webasto, Retarder, centre toilet, centre continental door, servery, TV/video, power door



2001 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

8 speed manual gearbox, 51 reclining seats, seat belts, footrests, aisle carpets, curtains, double glazing, air-conditioning, webasto, courier fridge, radio/pa/cassette



1999 IVECO BEAULAS STERGOE E

8 Speed gearbox, 49 seats, air conditioning, curtains, double glazed, centre continental door, telma, power door, toilet, radio/pa/cass, tv/video, drinks, fridge



1996 IVECO EURORIDER BEULAS STERGO E

6 speed gearbox, 49 double glazing, A/C, retarder, rear toilet, continental door, drinks machine, fridge/courier fridge, video

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Moseley Distributors invest in new showroom facility



An investment of £500,000 has given Moseley Distributors this new coach showroom/storage building capable of holding up to 25 coaches.

Ten years after building a 32,000sq.ft. workshop, stores and office building on a seven and a half acre site at Glenmavis near Airdrie in Strathclyde, Moseley Distributors have added a 12,000sq.ft. showroom/storage building. Built opposite to, but separate from, the existing buildings and in the same style, it will be used to

enable different types of seating to be demonstrated. A door within this section leads through to a reception area and a pair of offices that are now home to Jim Mathieson and Iain Brown, Moseley's sales managers. A kitchen and toilet are also provided.



The new offices and reception area.



Two rows of nine coaches can be accommodated alongside each other with sufficient space between for the lockers to be opened.

store new and used coaches, rather than leaving them exposed to the elements.

Measuring 100ft by 120ft, the main section of the structure will comfortably house two rows of nine coaches with room to spare, and could house a total of up to 25 vehicles, if they were parked close together. The intention is that sufficient space will be left between vehicles to enable the side lockers to be opened without damaging other coaches. Entrance for stock is through a powered roller shutter door at the front, though there is a second similar door at the left hand rear of the building.

In addition to being used for the storage of coaches, a small area in one corner has been carpeted to

MD, Jim Tweedie explained that it had always been his intention to put up another building for vehicle storage in time. 'We built the workshop

and store first because there has always been a lack of repair facilities for operators in Scotland and because we thought it was the most important. It has been that way for ten years and has cost us in cleanliness. We have to clean the coaches thoroughly every two weeks when they stand outside, and because of the cold the batteries go flat and other problems arise. This way we will clean them once and they should remain clean.'

Opening the new building does not mean that Jim will be laying off any of the three full time cleaning staff employed. 'The staff will remain the same, but we will be able to use them better,' he said.

He continued, 'another reason is that new vehicles cost anything up to £250,000 and to leave them in an open yard is a bit daft. Our used stock level at the moment is probably around £2.6million. Having that in an open yard, day in and day out, is a concern. New stock levels



The bright and spacious new facility.

depend on the time of year. This has been an exceptional year because of the Highland Heritage order for 15, but in February we had 23 new in stock. If you said that was an average of £200,000 a vehicle - that's £4.6m in new vehicles. We had a similar number of used, so you're pushing £6.7m sat there. It all adds up.'

Though it was the beginning of June when I called and the building had only been in use for a fortnight, it was easy to see the benefit of having everything under cover. Light panels within the roof meant that it was bright inside, despite there being no external windows.

Eleven used vehicles and two new coaches were present, all prepared to show them off to advantage to potential customers. The company has always tried to maintain a reasonable choice of coaches to offer operators, though the overwhelming majority will always be Volvos, reflecting what Jim finds the demand is for. Typically, of the 11 coaches there, nine were Volvos, the exceptions being two minicoaches: a 2002 Toyota Optimo V and a 1999 Mercedes Vario Plaxton Cheetah. The



Two used and one new minicoach in a corner of the new building.

Volvos included two tri-axle B10MT Van Hool T9s (1xX, 1xY), two 2001 B10M Jonckheere Mistral, a trio of mid 1990s B10M Van Hool Alizee T8s, a 2000 B10M Berkhof Axial and an N registered B10M Jonckheere Deauville. The new coaches were a Sitcar Beluga Vario and a 57 seat Bova Futura 12.340.

It was a beautiful sunny day, but thinking back to the torrential rain I experienced on my most recent previous visit, I could see the advantage of customers being able to inspect a coach without having to brave the elements. In the past a coach could have been moved into the workshops for inspection, but now an operator can browse among the variety of stock on offer.

'The real benefit will be in winter. You know what the weather can be like round here in February. We always keep a snowplough,' said Jim.



Jim's 'wee toy,' a John Deere 3215 tractor with hoist and snowplough that is an essential part of the Moseley Distributors fleet.



With landscaping underway in the foreground, the new showroom is to the right with the original workshop and offices beyond.

Jim estimates that the total additional investment has been around the £500,000 mark. It has originally been intended that the landscaping would be done at a later date, but it is now being done at the same time, so that all is finished. Despite the scope that the size of the site allows for future developments, Jim has no plans to do any more building.

Not all vehicles are kept in the new facility; a couple of older coaches were to be found to the rear of the original workshops. Among them, earmarked for eventual preservation, was the first Bova ever sold in Scotland. New to Mackies

of Alloa, this 1981 Europa 53 seater was taken in part exchange against another coach.

On the concrete hard standing, where the stock previously stood, operators bringing vehicles to the workshops for attention now have plenty of space to leave them. In the past they were often left among the stock and there was the risk of accidental damage.

Tractor

When I visited, work was continuing on the landscaping of the site. This involved the use of several tractors, so I was not that surprised to see a large green John Deere 3215 parked next to the

new depot. It transpired that this did not belong to the landscaping contractors, but was the dealership's latest fleet acquisition, having been bought new last September. Jim Tweedie admits to being very pleased with 'my wee toy' saying that 'everyone should have one.' Complete with a variety of attachments, it performs all manner of roles. A hoist attachment extends five metres, which makes it ideal if a bulb needs changing in the workshop, or the guttering or any of the heaters need attention.

Another attachment is the snowplough, previously alluded to, to keep the sloping drive to the site clear during the not infrequent winter blizzards. The company has always maintained a snowplough,

though the previous example was somewhat less impressive and versatile. Without the plough on hand, the exposed site could easily become cut off. 'There are usually three or four weeks every winter when we couldn't get a vehicle out without the plough,' said Jim. He believes in being prepared, as well as the plough there is a generator on site that will run both buildings when the lines go down, as they sometimes do. 'It only takes two minutes to turn it on,' said Jim.

Market

Despite having invested heavily in the new building, Jim believes 2006 will be a tough one all round. He commented, 'the operating base is struggling, which will work its way back to the dealers and manufacturers. There are too many products on the market. Having the workshop will help us.'

Earlier in the year he supplied 16 new 14m Van



A seat display area has been incorporated within the new facility.

Hool Alicron Volvo B12BTs, all but one of them to Highland Heritage, but he does not think that this configuration will become a volume seller. '14 metres for specific operations I can see, but I think 13m will become the standard for normal operation,' he said. Already, a number of operators have taken 13m Bova Futures on two axles, among them Mackies of Alloa, who have taken two. Jim thinks this will be an option that continues to sell, because those who have them like them. He has also asked Van Hool about a 13m three-axle B12T option.

Last word

Moseley Distributors, along with the other associated Moseley companies, have always been very professional in the way they act and the face they portray to the customer. This latest substantial investment in ensuring the quality of the product offered is further evidence of this professionalism.

By Stuart Jones

Western Commercial



The new premises on the Righead Industrial Estate in Bellshill.

Western Commercial is the Mercedes-Benz commercial vehicle dealer for central Scotland covering the Greater Strathclyde area, Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife. Part of the privately owned Eastern & Western Group, it won the Mercedes-Benz Commercial Vehicle Dealer of the Year award last year. It now has three commercial operations in the area, having taken over the franchises previously run by Derwent and Vardy, in addition to which the company is heavily involved in car sales. Completely new commercial dealerships with showrooms, large vehicle display areas and drive-through workshops have been built at Govan in Glasgow and Bellshill. A third new one is under construction at Broxburn to replace the former Newbridge site near to Edinburgh airport.

The relationship between Western Commercial and Mercedes-Benz goes back 25 years, and for much of that time the company has been directly involved in the supply of minibuses and minicoaches, though the PSV side has always been a small part of a much bigger organisation. This involvement goes beyond the straightforward supply of new factory built vehicles to involve the limited stocking

of new vehicles with coachbuilt bodies and conversions and the taking of part exchanges.

John Leitch, 61, has been responsible for PSV

311, starting at £25,000, while the 413CDi is also supplied as a more luxurious 16 seater, usually with conversion work undertaken by Onyx of Doncaster. Onyx also converts the Vario O.614 for Western with up to 24 seats.

Mercedes-Benz does not offer the higher weight capacity 616CDi as a van for conversion, only as a chassis cowl. Since seeing the low floor Kusters conversion of it, John has wanted to offer a dual-purpose low floor version, but has yet to find a way of sourcing it.

As well as supplying Vario van conversions, John also offers coachbuilt options on it, with a stock build programme for the Plaxton Beaver 2 plus. He has recently delivered his first DDA compliant Beaver 2 Plus with PLS side lift to Ready Pay of Blythe, Northumberland. 'There's not much else in that realm. The alternative is the Optare Solo, which is £20,000 dearer,' he said. 'It's not yet clear how acceptable the DDA Beaver will be to the market. Traditionally it's been a core seller and Plaxton have big plans for it. We are taking stock examples. I think that, pricewise, it's in the right league, though operators would like a



Western Commercial have supplied a great many Plaxton Beaver bodied Varios over the years and have a stock programme for the new DDA specification Beaver 2 Plus with side PLS lift.

Sales with Western for the past 16 years, prior to which he worked for Cotters' Caledonia dealership selling full size Van Hool and Plaxton coaches. For his first 15 years selling the smaller vehicles he was based at the Newbridge site, moving to the state-of-the-art Bellshill facility on the Righead Industrial Estate when it opened a year ago. The site is handily located off the A89, in close proximity to the M8 and M9 motorways. Despite the size of the group, John is Western's only dedicated bus and coach employee, though he does have extensive expertise in specialist fields and the benefit of a skilled workshop to support him.

Speaking to him at Bellshill, John explained that he focused on the market up to 33 seats, selling an extensive range of new Mercedes-Benz products starting with eight and nine seat versions of the Vito. The Vito Traveliner with seven passenger seats starts at £16,500. Beyond this there is the Sprinter range with between 12 and 16 seats. Mercedes' own Traveliner provides 16 passenger seats on the



A new stock Traveliner.



John Leitch.



This former Mercedes-Benz 311CDi Traveliner demonstrator with 16 passenger seats was being offered at £22,000 plus VAT.

few more seats than the 29 that are possible within the weight.'

Plaxton Cheetah Varios are also regularly supplied, though more aggressive selling by Plaxton's own team has reduced the number going through Western's premises.



Ready for delivery to Capability Scotland was one of three eight seat O.614s with Fleet Finish of Forfar conversions.

John remains a fan of the Vario, pointing out that, at the peak of their popularity, he was selling around 60 annually of this model alone. Apart from the Plaxton examples, he has also supplied welfare specification vehicles with Nutrack bodies.

While the majority of Vario O.614 conversions



Other manufacturer's products are taken in part exchange, such as this T registered Ford Transit.

are supplied as 24 seaters, it is possible to supply a 26 seater to special order if an 814D van is sourced from Ireland, where this model is offered. Just about to be delivered when I was there was one of a trio of eight seat O.614s with Fleet Finish of Forfar conversions. Equipped with Ricon tail lifts, they are being supplied to Capability Scotland

for carrying disabled passengers in the Edinburgh area.

The stock build programme ensures operators can source a vehicle if they win a contract at short notice. Many of the buses in the programme are sold off the line without ever seeing Bellshill, which avoids the problem of deciding what colour interior to specify. In his advertisements, John always indicates whether how many weeks off delivery a bus is, if it is not

actually in stock.

Market

Looking at the new minibus market, John commented, 'It's very

sector. 'They like the fact that we have stock and they know they can trust me,' said John. 'We win our share of council tenders too. Sometimes we work in conjunction with the truck side to satisfy a mixed fleet requirement.'

Geographically, though the bulk of business is local, vehicles are often sold much further afield. A Plaxton Cheetah was recently delivered to P&T Coaches at Beltersound on the Isle of Unst, which is nearer Norway than Bellshill. Robertsons of Yell have also purchased a Cheetah, within the last six months.

Some used Y registered 24 seaters were supplied to Euro Taxis of Bristol a few months ago. John finds that quite a few English operators venture north of the border looking for bargains. If someone wants to know what a vehicle looks like, he will happily e-mail a picture to them.

Full maintenance packages can be offered, but



This trio of Vario O.614D Crest converted 24 seaters were bought in for resale.



New and used Vitos are available from stock.

strange at present. On the bus service side it is almost as if operators don't know which way to go. Many are frightened to go forward because of the low floor situation, unless they get a big grant to buy a Solo. You talk to operators and none of them have ever picked up passengers in wheelchairs, unless it is on a dedicated service. It makes you wonder where the Government got its information from to start with. Soon we'll have fleets running round with £4,000 of unused tail lift on them.'

Used

On the used front, some of the stock arrives in part exchange against new sales. In addition to this, clean used Mercedes vehicles of the right size and age profile are bought in for resale to maintain a balanced stocklist. Stocks were relatively low when I called but included a trio of identical 1999 (T) Vario 614D Crest van conversions with 24 coach seats. Offered at a retail price of £22,000 plus VAT each, they had been repainted white and were well presented. Another T registered vehicle was an old shape Ford Transit 16 seater on offer at £9,500.

Customers

Most of John's customers come from the private

take up is limited because most customers have their own mechanics, so vehicles only come back for warranty work or the more difficult problems. Warranty is two years on new Varios and three years on the Sprinter. John has concluded some maintenance contracts, 'often for airport parking type operations. It's generally the high mileage operators that see the advantage in it.'

Summary

Sales levels vary heavily on the state of the market and the relevance of the product offering to it. John explained that it can vary between 50 and 150 with last year a difficult one with sales at the lower end of that spectrum.

With modern premises, a brand with a formidable reputation in the field, availability from stock and friendly service, Western Commercial is committed to serving a market niche that many other commercial dealers neglect.

By Stuart Jones

Unvi - Galician Flair

Most coach operators will have heard of the name Unvi because the Spanish bodybuilding concern works with Esker Bus and Coach of Ireland to produce a range of up market mini and midicoaches for Ireland and the UK.

We have tracked the development of this young company through the pages of B&CB, so it seemed only logical to see for ourselves how this collaboration is working. My companions on the trip were Alan White and David Mackinless from Esker UK who, like me, were making their first visits to the factory. In Spain we linked up with Esker MD Danny McGee and Brian Ferguson from Harry Ferguson Sales.

Unvi is located in the small Spanish city of Ourense in Galicia. That is the bit of Spain that sits on top of Portugal and gives it an Atlantic coast. It isn't the easiest place to get to as it is located some 400 miles North East of Madrid. The nearest main airport is at Vigo on the Atlantic coast and sadly, as yet, none of the low cost carriers fly there. So to reach Ourense it's a case of getting a flight to Madrid and then another up to Vigo. From Vigo, Ourense is about an hour's drive along one of those superb Spanish motorways, which seem to have been literally stuck onto the mountainsides, and I mean mountainsides, for this is a very mountainous

chassis.

Again, in common with many Spanish body-builders, Unvi is part of a much larger group although unlike Irizar this is a privately owned group and not a co-operative. The parent group is Perez Rumbao SA. Its primary business is as a vehicle supplier, holding franchises for VW, Audi, Seat, Skoda, Hyundai, Fiat, Lancia, Alfa Romeo, Volvo, Saab, Honda and Porsche cars together with the Iveco truck franchise. It is also a major



An aerial picture of the Unvi Ourense plant.

Euros 20million.

The company has a range of minibus products of its own based on the Mercedes Sprinter and Vario ranges, VW LT46 and the Iveco Daily. It also developed a range of luxury coach bodies called the Cimo and these can go up to 12 metres and are built on a Mercedes, Iveco (Irisbus), Scania, MAN and Volvo chassis although only in small numbers.

A major product line for the company is the production of single deck city buses. Its Urbis design is available in a range of lengths from midis right up to full-length units able to carry 100 passengers. Unvi bodies on chassis from Mercedes, Iveco (Irisbus), MAN, Scania, Volvo, VDL and Alexander Dennis.

Another important product in the Unvi line-up is an open-top double deck sightseeing bus. These are built on Mercedes, Iveco (Irisbus), Volvo and Alexander Dennis chassis.

The company also manufactures mobile libraries, clinics, offices and classrooms and, as we showed in B&CB issue 811 (15 April 2005), has recently begun producing special 4x4 minicoaches for use in difficult terrain.

Much of the production, aside from that built for Esker, is absorbed into the Spanish and Portuguese markets but the company also has



A batch of Esker Riadas passing through the framing stage.

area.

There are still many independent bodybuilders in Spain and they range in size from giants like Irizar producing over 1000 vehicles a year down to others making less than 100 units a year. Unvi lies in the middle with a current annual production of around 300 units.

Like most Spanish bodybuilders Unvi has a wide product range and bodies on a variety of

fuel retailer in Galicia and has a large stake in the distribution of butane gas. The company employs 800 people, 300 of them at the Unvi plant.

Unvi - Unidad de Vehículos Industriales SA is Perez Rumbao SA's only manufacturing operation. The company in its present form was founded in 1995 although it does have links back to 1922. Since 1995 it has grown exponentially. In 1996 it had a turnover of Euros 2million - last year it was



This Esker Touring shows the way Unvi have managed to accommodate an entrance ahead of the front axle.

significant export business in Benelux, France, Switzerland, Italy, North Africa and parts of Central and South America. It has also won a contract to supply vehicles to Iceland.

The modern factory on the outskirts of Ourense has only recently been trebled in production capacity but that additional capability has already been filled, largely by Esker's needs coupled with a high demand for the open top double deckers.

In order to raise its production capacity still further, the company has recently bought a major stake in the Portuguese bodybuilder Camo, in Oporto. This makes a lot of sense because Oporto is only two hours from Ourense and linked by an excellent motorway.

The Esker connection

Back in early 2002 Danny McGee, of Irish van converters KVC, was looking for a midicoach design based on the Mercedes Atego chassis that he could slot in at the top of his range of predominantly Mercedes Sprinter and Vario based conversions. His research led him to Ourense where Unvi were building a similar vehicle on the 1018 Atego chassis. It wasn't exactly what Danny was looking for but it wasn't a million miles away. He was



Unvi Urbis single deck city bus ready for painting.

Esker Bus and Coach to market the Unvi built products leaving KVC to concentrate on its van conversion business although Esker does sell



An Esker Touring on the production line at Ourense.

impressed with the manufacturing and quality standards of production, the company's control systems and by the expertise and flair in the engineering and design departments.

What Danny was looking for was high floor midicoach with an entrance ahead of the front axle and good luggage accommodation. The complicated Irish VAT regulations favour vehicles of that type.

Working with the design team at Unvi and in particular with Export Sales Manager Alexandre Lecompte (a Frenchman!) and General Manager Javier Pereira, they came up with a stylish coach based on the Mercedes Atego 1223L chassis. Putting an entrance ahead of the front axle on a front-engined chassis is not easy but Unvi achieved it. The result was the Esker Touring, which was launched at the back end of 2002. Since that date the design has been steadily refined. Sales have increased steadily and will soon pass the 100 mark. The Touring can seat up to 41 passengers.

The success of the Touring encouraged Danny McGee to look to develop other models. He formed



A left hand drive Cimo outside the expanded factory at Ourense.

some of the KVC products as well.

The next product introduced was the Esker Cimo and this is a development of the Unvi

big factor.

Demand for all the products has been spectacular, not only in Ireland but also in Northern Ireland and particularly in the UK, which is why Esker decided to open Esker Bus and Coach UK in addition to their existing distributor Harry Ferguson Sales in Scotland. There are no territory boundaries and both companies work closely with each other.

Esker business now accounts for one third of the throughput of the Unvi factories.

Unvi production

The Unvi production system follows fairly conventional lines. At the beginning of the process the base vehicle is shorn of its cab and all the bits that aren't needed. Certain components are then re-positioned to suit PSV operation. The whole of the conversion has been fully approved by Mercedes Benz. Next the welded body frame, manufactured of high quality square tubular steel, is added. The body then passes into a special booth for full corrosion protection before moving on to be



A wheelchair accessible Unvi Sprinter with the wheelchair bay at the rear of the vehicle.

panelled.

The fibreglass mouldings of the Unvi product are of a very high standard and are produced by a subsidiary of the company, based nearby, called Industria de Plasticos Refigal.

Once panelled, the vehicle goes into one of two spray booths for painting using high quality two pack acrylic paints. The standard of finish is very good.

Demand for vehicles is such that, at the moment, some of the painting has to be done at a separate neighbouring facility but with Unvi staff on hand to check the quality.

Having reached the end of the building the vehicles are then turned and proceed along two finishing



The Camo plant is a large facility located on the outskirts of Oporto.

process quality is the keynote.

One of the great secrets of Unvi's quality is



An Esker Cimo being inspected at the Camo plant.

lines where progressively they are glazed and all the internal trim is completed. Throughout the

behind the scenes. It has an advanced computer control system, which ensures that all components



The Camo plant has a large production facility, all but one vehicle in this shot are either Unvi or Unvi/Esker products.

are monitored for quality and all stages of production are similarly monitored. This means that Esker can instantly check on the status of its products at all stages of build. It can also view them, because the whole plant is fully covered by CCTV. Originally installed as a health and safety measure the system has also helped the business in its drive to achieve the best quality. Using a special password, Esker can also access the CCTV system remotely and check on their vehicles.

When I visited Ourense, the bulk of the vehicles going through were for Esker. There were examples of the Touring,

including some to be fitted with wheelchair lifts, Riada 616s and Riada 815s at various stages of production. There was also one Esker Cimo being prepared for delivery.

Other vehicles in production included some



An Irisbus based Unvi open top sightseeing bus destined for Segovia.

Sprinter and Vario vans being converted into Unvi minibuses including fitting a full R66 frame inside the body. There was also an interesting Unvi version of the Touring from a batch for Iceland which were being built on the Atego 1523L chassis with full size 22.5in wheels. The Touring normally rides on 19in wheels although Esker are looking at fitting 21in wheels and, depending on how the Icelandic vehicles turn out, may also offer



The latest style Atego cab is already used for the Cimo and will shortly be standard with the Touring.

the 22.5in option. All Tourings are now being built on the 1523 Atego chassis rather than the original 1223. At the moment all those in production have the older Atego dash design but the first chassis with the new cab interior had just arrived at the plant. Cimo production is already utilising the new cab interior.

On one side of the plant is a dedicated line for the production of the Urbis city bus and in production were both long and short versions of the city bus mounted on Mercedes and MAN chassis. They have in the past also bodied the Dennis Dart.

Outside in the compound was a pair of Sprinter accessible minibuses. These had the popular continental layout of rear door and wheelchair bay at the back. There was also a conventional Iveco minibus with rear mounted tail lift and a pair of mobile libraries based on the Cimo body and mounted on the Mercedes Atego chassis. Another interesting vehicle was a 39-seat Unvi Cimo coach body mounted on the Iveco Euro Cargo chassis.

There has been some talk of the Sprinter 616 chassis being phased out when the new Sprinter emerges early next year. Esker have been assured by Mercedes-Benz in Germany that this will not be before 2007, at the earliest, and it seems that Mercedes may well be re-considering the withdrawal of the model.

Esker is also looking at the possibility of producing a longer version of the Touring giving up to 49 seats and possibly a good base for a school bus.

Unvi in Portugal

As I said earlier, Unvi have recently taken a stake in Camo, the Portuguese bodybuilder located in Oporto. The plan is to use this facility for batch production, so the manufacture of standard versions of the Esker Cimo has already been switched to this facility, as has the production of open top double deckers.

The Camo factory was formerly part of Unicar and is a relatively old building but it does have a large production area. The bulk of production was



A recent development was the introduction of this Irisbus based 4x4 minibus.



One of two Unvi open top deckers on Irisbus chassis destined for the Vatican City.

given over to Unvi products. The only Camo vehicles in build were a couple of Sprinter based



Displayed at a recent FIAA exhibition in Madrid was this Unvi bodied Dennis Dart.

minibuses and a handful of Camo's own open top double deck design mounted on the Volvo B9L chassis. In one corner of the building a trio of Camo single deck city buses on Mercedes chassis were being refurbished.

The plant isn't as well laid out as the Unvi Ourense plant but the standard of production seemed good.

Unvi supply all the parts for their vehicles to the Camo plant from Ourense. The Portuguese plant acting solely as an assembler. Having said that, the quality of build, finish and paint were equal to that at the Spanish factory. The permanent presence of Unvi technicians obviously helps enormously in this respect and daily transmission of data back to

Ourense means that the build status of every vehicle can be monitored from the headquarters.

Seven Esker Cimos were in various stages of build and more chassis were waiting to enter the build line. There were also ten Unvi open top deckers in various stages of production. Near the end of the production line was one of two deckers on Irisbus chassis, in an all white livery, which are for operation in the Vatican City. Unvi has already supplied a large number of sightseeing buses to Rome and has another batch about to be built. Other vehicles were being built for Segovia and shortly they will begin building a batch on Dennis Trident chassis for Madrid. The Spanish capital already has Trident based open toppers bodied by East Lancs in service.

I cannot say that I got a very warm welcome from the Camo people. It was obvious to me that the company has some problems judging from the lack of its own products in build and perhaps

they see the arrival of Unvi as the thin edge of the wedge. On the other hand it could well be their saviour because with some re-organisation the plant has great potential.

Alex Lecompte said that they were very happy with the quality coming out of the Oporto facility. They had quickly adapted to the Unvi quality standard and the vehicles don't return to Ourense for final checking. He felt the facility had a great potential for handling batch production. It is likely that other Unvi models will be built in the facility in the near future, enabling greater production flexibility at the Ourense plant, which will also find it easier to concentrate on vehicles requiring special attention.

The Esker Unvi combination has come a long way in a short time and developments in the pipeline will see that association continue to grow.

By Rob Orchard



A Camo designed Sprinter minibus under construction.

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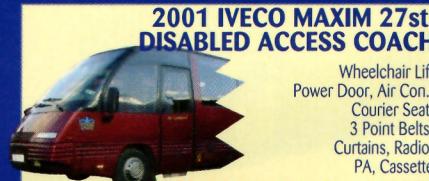
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Conversion, MoT till June 06.
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Vario Executive TV, Video,
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Reg 2001 Mercedes Vario
With tail lift, all seats removable.
Ideal dual purpose vehicle

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taxed, MOT April '06, clean & tidy,
condition**£50,000 ono**

Plaxton 425 1993, 53 seats,
Cummins engine, taxed MOT'd,
clean & tidy condition
.....**£29,000 ono**

Volvo B10M Van Hool 1991,
53/49, video, toilet, fridge, taxed,
tested, clean & tidy condition
.....**£30,000 ono**

Volvo B10M Duple Laser, MOT
June, needs n/s front screen
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821/1031652/FC

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821/1031531/FC

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821/1031773/FC

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Offers for sale**

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49 seater, centre sunken toilet,
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**£100,000 + VAT ono
Choice of 2**

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- MoT till May 2006

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821/1031741/FC

VOLVO B10M

1990 49 seater with centre sunken toilet, air con, telma, seatbelts, recently painted, good condition inside & out, MoT & taxed £20,000 ono

MERCEDES 814 VARIO

1998, 2 year old conversion, 25 seats with belts, excellent condition, MoT & taxed, must be seen £13,000 ono

SCANIA VAN HOOL K92

1988 (Auto) 53 seater with belts, recently retrimmed & painted, MOT & taxed, excellent condition for year & very reliable £13,000 ono

MERCEDES 609

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All above wired for TV & video

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1 x 49, 11m, rear toilet, good condition

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East Lancs body, 80 seats + 13 standees, 14.8 inches in height, white. Good condition, MoT Jan 06

Reduced for quick sale £16,500 + VAT ono

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1 x 49 seater, blown engine, MoT July '05 Offers

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Leyland Tiger TL11 260

1988 57 seater Plaxton Paramount 3200. Taxed/PSV'd, seat belts fitted £15,500 ono

Mercedes 814D 1989

33 seater coach Plaxton Beaver, taxed & 112 months PSV seat belts fitted £5,500 ono

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regardless of cost

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1996 MERC 709 Leic Carr 29 seats

1993 MERC 811 Autobus Coach 25 seats

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Volvo B10M 53 seats. Good condition, MoT Feb '06. Taxed Aug '05 £17,000 + VAT

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Mobile: 0776 1242801

821/1031739/FC

SLEAFORDIAN COACHES

Volvo Plaxton Premiere 320 1996 (N) 49/53 full soft trim R/c seats, double glazed, c/s toilet, c/s seat, blinds, servery, fridge, carpet, TV/video, r/cassette, pa, telma, webasto. Tested April 2006. Owned and maintained by us since 1998, full service history. Number plates to be retained £49,000 + VAT

Volvo Plaxton Premiere 320 1995 (M) 49/53 R/c seats, double glazed, c/s toilet, c/s seat, blinds, servery, fridge, carpet, r/cassette, pa, telma, webasto. Tested Nov 2005. Owned and maintained by us since 1997, full service history. Number plates to be retained £40,000 + VAT

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821/1031648/FC

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821/1031777/FC

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1 x 49 Exec Automatic Air con preferred Must be mint

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82/1/031520/H/C

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Both with seat belts

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82/1/031797/HWD

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82/1/031723/HWD

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82/1/031475/HWD

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07789 00 24 23

82/1/031655/HWD

1988 Leyland Tiger Plaxton 3500 body, 53 seats, fully belted, tested May 06, Cummins L10 engine, ZF automatic gearbox £6,500 ono + VAT

1982 MCW Metrobus, 71 seats, tested until Nov 05, recently repainted throughout, very tidy example £2,500 ono + VAT

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82/1/031822/HWD

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82/1/031521/HWD

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82/1/031655/HWD

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Under the End of Life Vehicles Regulations 2003 now in force, it is illegal to dispose of vehicles by other means than through a licenced dismantler operating an Authorised Treatment Facility.

The Environment Agency has now joined forces with the DVLA to keep track of all redundant vehicles to be scrapped.

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1990 814 MERCEDES, 30 seater with 2 x tables, new MOT, taxed/tested. £9,500ono. 1989 517 MERCEDES, 16 seater, accessible vehicle with wheelchair lift £1,250ono. Tel: 0781 216 9399 821/1031769/ME

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Volkswagen Transporter SWB, 1.9ltr Turbo Diesel registered 24/05/2001, blue, 4 seats, 1 owner, very good condition, manual transmission, 29,000 miles, MOT until 03/03/2006, full width lightweight ramp, non-slip flooring, power steering, radio/cassette player, short wheelbase, side load door, single front passenger seat, two rear saloon passenger seats, could take 2 wheelchairs £10,200 plus VAT



Iveco Daily LWB 2.8ltr Turbo Diesel, first registered 01/09/2000, white, 16 seats, 1 owner. Lowered front entrance, PSV and COIF, radio cassette, entrance handrails. Very good condition. Manual transmission. 43,000 miles £11,000 plus VAT



Fiat Ducato LWB 2.8 ltr Diesel, first registered 29/03/2000, white, 5 seats, 1 owner, very good condition, manual transmission, 31,000 miles, could take 2 wheelchairs, LWB high roof, non-slip flooring, power steering, radio/cassette player, RICON CLEARWAY electric wheelchair lift, service history, side load door, soft cord trimmed interior, twin front passenger seat, two rear saloon passenger seats £8,200 plus VAT

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Optare Bonito Ford Transit, coach built, 16 seats, forced air, plug door, large boot

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L94 TOYOTA OPTIMO MK3 21 SEATER



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2000 IVECO BEULAS STERGO, 48 reclining seats, air conditioning, centre sunken toilet, continental door, fridge, water heater, retarder. Interior - green. Exterior - silver.



1999 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PREMIER
3500, 49 reclining seats, rear sunken toilet, continental door, air conditioning, drinks machine, double glazed side windows, curtains, door to hat racks, Telma retarder. Interior - red/gold. Exterior - white.



1998 BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, continental door, air conditioning, fridge, water boiler, video & monitor, retarder. Interior - red. Exterior - silver/black.



1993 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE, 48 reclining seats, rear toilet & continental door, aircraft style hat racks, air conditioning, drinks machine, Webasto heater, wired for video & monitor. Interior - brown. Exterior - white.



1993 DAF SB3000 CAETANO ALGARVE, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazing, fridge, water boiler, video & monitor. Interior - grey/red. Exterior - white/red.



1992 TOYOTA OPTIMO, 18 reclining seats, courier seat, powered entrance door. Interior - grey/blue. Exterior - white.

2000 SCANIA K124 IRIZAR, 49 reclining seats, rear sunken toilet, continental door, air conditioning, fridge, video & monitor. Interior - blue. Exterior - white.

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1997 SETRA S250, 48 reclining seats, double courier seat, centre sunken toilet, continental door, air conditioning, fridge, water boiler, video & monitor. Interior - green. Exterior - white..

1997 LDV CONVOY, 16 seats, 3 point seat belts. Interior - grey. Exterior - white.

1993 DAF SB3000 CAETANO ALGARVE, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazing, fridge, water boiler, video & monitor. Interior - grey/red. Exterior - white/red.

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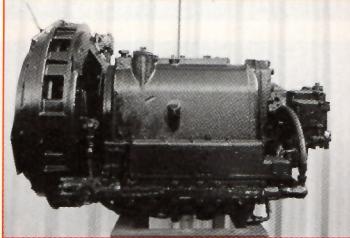
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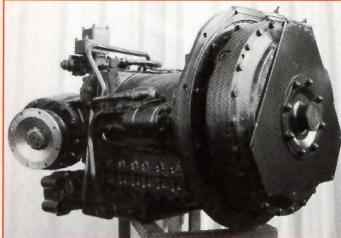
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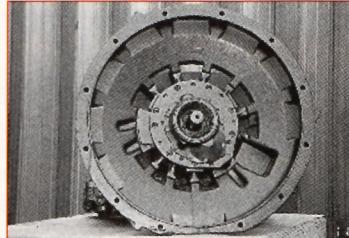
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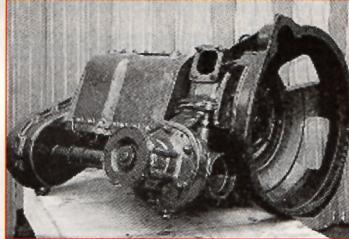
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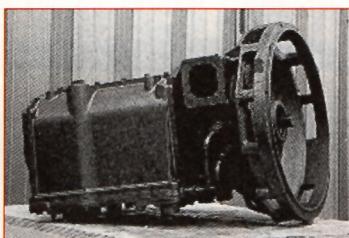
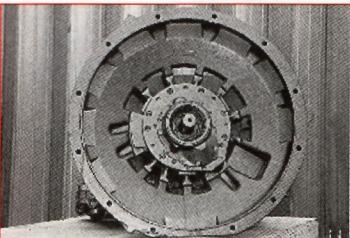
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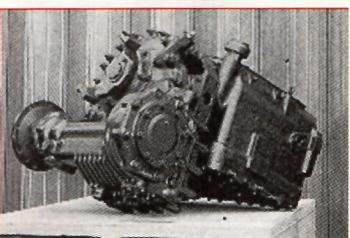
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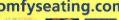
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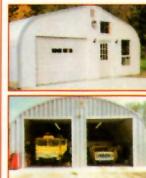
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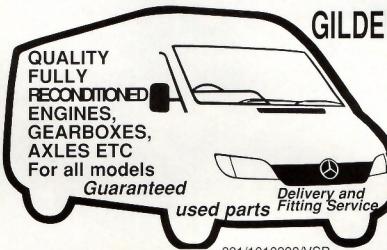


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Kara&Jalmarit and Plasticworld join forces

Kara&Jalmarit International Limited, Lancaster based importer and supplier of heating, LED lighting and reversing safety products has agreed a sole British Isles importation agreement with Portuguese plastic components manufacturer Plasticworld Lda.

Plasticworld is a high volume manufacturer with innovative products including air diffuser vents, curtain holders, grab handles, handrail fittings, emergency hammers, escutcheons, bell bushes and many other plastic components. Products featuring imitation wood trim and integrated LED lighting are included in the range. New customer specific designs are also available on request.

For further information, contact Kara&Jalmarit, telephone 01524 840804 or 07832 388505, eMail: esapirttijarvi@aol.com, or visit the website: www.plastic-world.net



A selection from the Plasticworld range.

OptiAir plastic air intake and filtration from Fleetguard

Fleetguard has launched OptiAir, a plastic air intake and filtration system offering higher flows, less restriction and longer filter life. The range includes seven systems from four to thirteen inches offering flow rates up to 31.15 cubic metres per minute. The systems feature a Twist Lock cover with multiple latching

positions and optional secondary filtration elements. In addition, the four, five, six and eight inch models are available in both straight and 90degree rotatable outlet versions. For more information, contact Fleetguard N.V., Blarenberglaan 4 B-2800 Mechelen, Belgium, telephone 0032 15 28 95 11.



Siemens improves London's bus service

Siemens has won a £120 million (€175 million) contract from Transport for London to track and monitor London's 8,000 buses using satellite navigation technology. The project is part of Transport for London's five-year investment programme and will provide better real-time information to passengers so they can see a more accurate predicted arrival time at 2,000 bus shelters around the city.

Nick Rendell, UK head of Siemens' telematics business, said: "This is an innovative project which will improve the quality of services for passengers and improve the performance of the capital's buses. The new systems will also help to prevent buses



technology and Siemens Business Services will install and maintain it for 10 years. The new technology would also play a

crucial role in helping to transport the millions of visitors London expects if its bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games is successful.

For further information, contact Siemens VDO Trading Limited, eMail: judith.pennington@siemens.com or visit the website: www.vdo.com/uk

StreetSmart shines light on Southampton's shelters

After waiting more than twelve months to get power to illuminate their bus shelters, Southampton City Council's problems were solved using solarcentury's streetSmart solar lighting system. With Eastleigh Borough Council also involved, ten shelters were retrofitted in an average installation time of just three hours. Each system provides year round power to the shelters without the need to connect to the national grid. Simon Gerrard, streetSmart sales manager, solarcentury said: "Southampton CC & Eastleigh BC are among the growing numbers of UK transport authorities who are questioning the need to connect their shelters to the grid when solar power is a reliable and cost effective alternative".

Transport authorities across the UK have tried to address the issue of public unease at waiting in unlit shelters by making provision for shelter illumination, however with grid connection costs and lead times being unpredictable, many shelters remain unlit. The streetSmart's system consists of a solar panel, long life batteries, energy management system and LED lighting unit. The LED's will provide 100,000 hours illumination

of 50 lux across the entire footprint of the shelter providing a secure environment for passengers. The solar panels are discreet in design and can be curved to fit the shape of the shelter. They contain no glass, are vandal resistant and require no maintenance. In addition, each system offsets 50 kg of CO₂ a year; and provides a visible commitment to the Government's Agenda 21. Southampton City Councillor Jill Baston said: "It is important for us to come up with more sustainable energy sources in the city and solar power is an efficient and environmentally friendly substitute for mains electricity".

The streetSmart system can be installed on most shelter designs and to date solarcentury have built or retrofitted systems into Queensbury, Trueform, Signature, Abacus, MAN, JCDecaux and Adshel shelters. For further information on solar illumination for shelters or stops contact Simon Gerrard at solarcentury on: 020 7803 0100; eMail: simon.gerrard@solarcentury.co.uk or visit the website www.solarcentury.com.

Futura is the choice again for Leons

Leons Coach Travel of Stafford have again chosen the Bova Futura for their latest fleet additions. Three 12m versions have just been supplied by Moseley PCV. All have the 340XE DAF engine matched to ZF fully automatic transmission.

Two of the coaches have 49 recliners, centre sunken toilet with continental door, air conditioning, Webasto, full sound and vision package and hot and cold drinks facilities. The third vehicle has 51 seats but no toilet. Instead the coach has seven sets of quick release seats and a wheelchair lift, enabling it to carry up to four wheelchairs. Apart from the absence of the toilet the interior specification is similar to the other coaches.




Plastows choose Volvo B12M

Oxfordshire coach operators Plastow's have chosen this Volvo B12M with 420bhp engine and I-Shift as their latest coach. It is fitted with Jonckheere Millennium Mistral bodywork seating 51. The specification includes a centre sunken toilet, continental exit, air conditioning and a full sound and vision package.

Volvo Bus and Coach Sales supplied the vehicle.



More Solos for Bowers

Bowers Coaches of Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire have taken delivery of another pair of Optare Solos. The 9.2m long vehicles have a seating capacity of 31 plus 13 standees. They feature a number of options including Richards and Shaw Integra belted seats, a KAB driver's seat, uprated Mobitec LED destination equipment at the front, side and rear and LED rear lights.

The buses operate over difficult hilly route between Bakewell, through Buxton, over the Cat and Fiddle to Macclesfield and also on the hourly service between Buxton and Glossop via Whalley Bridge and New Mills.

Express of Batley select the KVC Sprinter

Express of Batley have selected the Mercedes Sprinter 413 converted by KVC of Ireland as their latest fleet choice. The coach features 16 seats, skirt kit, forced air ventilation, bonded tinted windows, soft trimmed parcel racks, mahogany effect cappings and a full sound system. The coach was supplied by Esker Bus and Coach (UK).



Long EuroRider is Keith's Coaches latest

This 12.72m version of the Irisbus EuroRider chassis with Beulas Stergo E bodywork has just been delivered to Keith's Coaches of Newcastle upon Tyne by dealer UK Bus and Coach. The coach has seating for 55 and the interior specification includes centre sunken toilet, air conditioning, drinks machine and DVD player.

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